

Message Text

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ACTION SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 SCA-01 DHA-02 L-03 H-01
USIA-06 INR-07 /034 W
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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9974
AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC, DM
SUBJ: W/W ARRESTS: CAROLYN CURTIS MANSON AND DEBORAH RUTH SICK

REF: COTONOU 1313 AND PRECEDING

1. MN AUGUST 10, CONSUL ARRIVED AT PRISON, HOPPMUPW
ARRANGE VISIT OF ROSTEDT CHILDREN WITH MOTHER. THIS DENIED,
SAYING PERSONAL AUTHORIZATION OF STATE POLICE DIRECTOR REQUIRED.
CONSUL THEN ASKED TO SPEAK TO PRISONERS, AND THIS GRANTED BUT
CONSUL ACCOMPANIED BY ENGLISH-SPEAKING POLICEMAN WHO INSISTED
THAT CONSUL RESTRICT CONVERSATION TO GREETINGS AND TO FINDING
OUT IF PRISONERS NEEDED ANYTHING PURCHASED. EVERY EFFORT TO
BROADEN CONVERSATION WAS INTERRUPTED.

2. DESPITE RESTRICTION, PRISONERS ABLE TO INFORM CONSUL
THAT IN MIDDLE OF PREVIOUS NIGHT, GUARDS DESCENDED ON THEM,
TEARING DOWN TENTS, AND BREAKING UP THEIR CAMP FORCEFULLY.
MRS. ROSTEDT REFUSED TO GET OUT OF TENT, AND WAS CARRIED OFF
IN SLEEPING BAG SCREAMING. PRISONERS URGED THAT ROSTEDT
CHILDREN NOT BE BROUGHT FOR VISIT, SAYING IN THEIR OPINION
CHILDREN WOULD BE REINCARCERATED. AT TIME OF CONSUL'S
VISIT, PRISONERS IN PROCESS OF MOVING FROM CAMP AREA
AROUND VEHICLES TO LARGE ROOM OCCUPIED BY OTHER PRISONERS.
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3. BRITISH TOUR LEADER SAID THAT IF IT WERE NOT FOR
HAVING TWO LANDROVERS AND ONLY ONE DRIVER, HE WOULD BREAK
OUT. CONSUL POINTED OUT UTTER FUTILITY OF SUCH EFFORT,
TO WHICH HE SAID THAT AT LEAST THEY WOULD GO DOWN FIGHTING.
CONSUL CONTINUED TO STRESS HIS RESPONSIBILITY NOT TO
INCREASE PROBLEMS FOR OTHERS, TO WHICH HE FINALLY AGREED.

4. CHARGE D'AFFAIRS RAISED INCIDENT WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY PROTOCOL CHIEF PAQUI. PAQUI EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT PRISONERS NOT RELEASED, WAS CHAGRINED AT RECENT TREATMENT OF PRISONERS AND CONSUL REPORTED ABOVE, AND IMMEDIATELY PLACED PHONE CALLS TO DETERMINE WHAT GOING ON, WITHOUT SUCCESS. PAQUI BRIEFED ON CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS CONCERNING PROTECTIVE CONSULAR SERVICES, AND THE CRITICISM NOW BEING DIRECTED AT CONSULS FOR FAILURE TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT PROTECTION TO AMERICANS UNDER ARREST AS EXAMPLES OF PRESSURES WE NOW UNDER. PHONE CALL FROM CAROLYN MANSON'S FATHER, A PROMINENT DOCTOR, CITED AS FURTHER EXAMPLE OF PRESSURE WE CAN ANTICIPATE IN CASE. PAQUI SAID HE WOULD RAISE PROBLEM WITH FOREIGN MINISTER IMMEDIATELY TO SEEK HIS INTERVENTION IN CASE.

5. LAGOS: WE BELIEVE TIME NOW RIPE TO STEP UP PRESSURE. REQUEST THAT FINNISH EMBASSY AND BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER SEND CONSULS TO COTONOU TO MAKE THEIR REPRESENTATIONS. THEY MAY BE BRIEFED ON ABOVE.

6. DEPARTMENT: REQUEST THAT IF PRISONERS NOT RELEASED BY WEEKEND, YOU RAISE ARREST CASE WITH AMBASSADOR BOYA, ALONG LINES THAT WE WISH TO AVOID ANOTHER NAKADA CASE. ALSO REQUEST THAT ALL AFRICAN POSTS BE ADVISED AGAIN BY DEPARTMENT TO DISCOURAGE ANY AMERICAN TOURISTS FROM VISITING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BENIN. ANY TOURISTS WHO ARE UNWISE ENOUGH TO INSIST ON COMING TO BENIN SHOULD BE WARNED AGAINST TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS. IN PAST TEN DAYS FIVE FOREIGN NATIONALS HAVE BEEN INCARCERATED FOR TAKING PICTURES OF SEEMINGLY HARMLESS SCENES. THOMPSON

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